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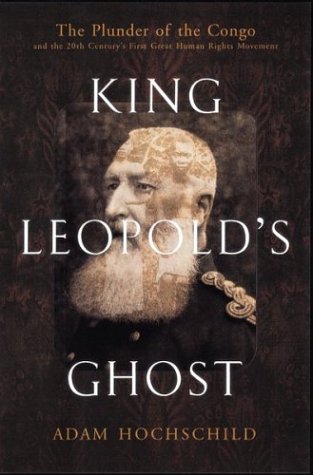
**Text Set:** The Impact of Conflict

Conflict is often defined in terms of a fight, battle or struggle. In regards to this text set conflict is the fight or struggle between countries or groups of people in a country that have resulted in tragedy or change be it economic, social or political. The term conflict is used instead of war in this text set as war often entails the use of weaponry and conflict in places such as Africa and the Middle East do not always involve the use of weapons. Although students in Canadian classrooms may be aware of past and present day conflicts the results of conflict on different groups of people is at times left unexplored. Although students may be familiar or may have heard of tragedies such as Rwanda or Darfur, they are not always given the opportunity to explore the impact of conflicts such as these. This text set will focus on the impact of conflict with a focus on specific groups such as civilians, families, children and soldiers. This text set will also make reference to conflict outside of the West. Although western countries, including Canada, may be involved in these conflicts in some way, be it through economics or peace keeping, the focus will remain on the economic, social and environmental consequences that the people in these countries may have experienced or are still experiencing. This set will include texts that help to promote discussion of what conflict/war is and the tragedy it brings.

The audience or grade level this text set is geared towards is grade 11 or 12. The relevance of this text set stems from the reality that many students, especially those who are from middle and upper class experiences, are unaware or uncaring of the effect that conflict or wars they have not witnessed or heard about have on the lives of those people and their country. As with many people in society, students tend to feel morally responsible for those closest to them, whether physically or emotionally. Known as the “proximity principle” this philosophical term supports the idea that the degree of moral responsibility we feel we have to a person is proportional to our relational closeness to that person**.** The goal of this text set is to create more awareness for students in Canadian classrooms about the conflict and the tragedy of war and how important activism or even recognition by powerful first world nations is in aiding these war torn countries.

\*note that although resources offered in this text set are provided for the purpose of exploring how conflict affects different groups of people the teacher will certainly be able to use these to explore ideas such as colonialism, the role of the global community in conflict, as well as many other themes and topics for discussion.

1. **A History:**



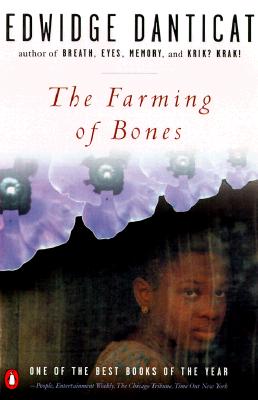
***King Leopold’s Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa***

**by Adam Hochschild**

**Summary:** written by historian Adam Hochschild this book tells the story of King Leopold of Belgium who searched the globe to find a colony for Belgium, searching along with other European powers for overseas dominions in Africa and Asia. He would eventually find a suitable location in what would become the Belgian Congo, later known as Zaire and now simply as Congo. Leopold set about establishing a rule of terror that would culminate in the deaths of 4 to 8 million indigenous people, "a death toll," Hochschild writes, "of Holocaust dimensions." Those who survived went to work mining ore or harvesting rubber, yielding a fortune for the Belgian king, who salted away billions of dollars in hidden bank accounts throughout the world. Hochschild's book draws heavily on eyewitness accounts of the colonialists' savagery and brings this little-studied episode contributes new insight onto European and African history.

**Rationale:** histories should a part of senior level English classrooms as they allow students to explore interesting and insightful texts from an academic source. Exploring controversial and serious topics such as the atrocities committed through colonialism will offer students important insight into the ongoing affects that slavery, exploitation and war have had on people living in areas such as the Congo. It makes students aware that their own history and the history of first world countries such as Canada and many places in Europe have played a significant role in the ongoing conflict experienced by both the people and environment in these once “conquered” places. This is also a very informative text as it covers the entire history of the period, including the major players involved in the takeover and subsequent reforming of the Congo which will in turn allow students to properly analyze and debate about this conflict on a local as well as global scale.

1. **Fiction**



***The Farming of Bones* by Edwidge Danticat**

**Summary:** this historical fiction is about a young girl named Amabella who is a Haitian servant for a Spanish family in the Dominican Republic in 1937. She is in love with a boy named Sebastien, the sugar cane cutter. Left as an orphan at a young age, Amabella watched her parents dies as they were killed in the Massacre River. The Generalissimo wants the Haitians out of his country and attempts to go back across the river from where he claims they belong. The persecution begins, and Amabelle tries to escape from the country where she has grown up to return to her roots. But, she loses Sebastien along the way. The focus shifts to Amabella’s journey in trying to find Sebastien.

**Rationale:** this novel will help students to explore the way in which conflict, and in this case the cruel labour conditions and war declared on an entire race of people. The title itself makes reference to working in the cane fields. This type of labor could often prove to be dangerous and even life threatening as it scars and mutilates many of the workers. However, the farming of bones also refers to digging up the past. Inundated with references to the past, the story contains many instances where characters are unable to move on. Through literature students will be able to explore and perhaps even experience an emotional reaction to the horrible persecutions and murders of the Haitians during this turbulent time. It is important for students to recognize that those often most deeply and tragically affected by conflict are those who are the most vulnerable, often civilians. Students will also be able to explore a non-western history about the violent way in which racism and hatred manifest itself in violence, which is often exerted by a higher authority. This novel will also allow students to explore the love and hope experienced by the main character throughout the story, reflecting the love and hope experienced by family, friends and neighbours who are forced to flee their homes and loss their loved ones during horrific conflicts such as these.

1. **Visual Art:**

***Guernica* by Pablo Picasso**



**Summary:** Created in 1937 *Guernica* was painted as an immediate reaction to the Nazi's devastating casual bombing practice on the Basque town of Guernica during Spanish Civil War. This painting shows the tragedies of war and the suffering it inflicts upon individuals, particularly innocent civilians. Once it was completed *Guernica* was displayed around the world in a brief tour, becoming famous and widely acclaimed. This tour helped bring the Spanish Civil War to the world's attention.

**Rationale:** this art piece is a perpetual reminder of the tragedies of war. It is an anti-war symbol and an embodiment of peace. Taking into consideration the time in which this was created the bull probably represents the onslaught of Fascism. Picasso said it meant brutality and darkness. He also stated that the horse represented the people of Guernica. This painting truly is a valuable piece to expose students to as it challenges our notions of warfare as heroic and exposes it as a brutal act of self-destruction. Using this art piece in the classroom would be an excellent way to explore the ways in which war and conflict create violence and death in the lives of the people in these warring countries. It would also be an interesting piece to use for discussion of how people use art as a means of garnering global recognition of injustices committed through conflict as well as the different responses given by the global community.

1. **Visual Art**

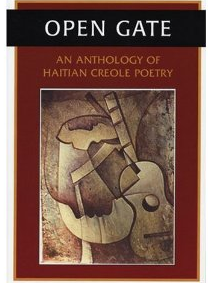


***Hope* by Fareeha Ghezal Yousufzai**

**Summary:** as described by Ursula Sautter of the New York Time this painting is of a tree “so withered and broken that only a single scarred branch is still struggling heavenwards. Yet all life has not gone: a tiny leaf, green against the cerulean blue of the sky, stubbornly clings to a twig. For the circle of burka-clad women huddling around the forlorn trunk in the hot, dusty sunshine, it is a sign of hope” (Sautter, "Afghan Women Painters on Show”). This painting is part of an exhibition entitled "Make Art, Not War," the first-ever independent exhibition of works by female Afghan painters outside the strife-torn country.

**Rationale:** this painting is a strong symbol of the need for liberty, peace, and social justice especially for women as it was created by a woman who has known conflict her entire life and has been shaped by the terrors of war and oppression under the Soviet and the Taliban. Students will experience the effects that art can have in fostering awareness around injustices against women in countries that are in constant conflict. This painting can be used in an English classroom to discuss the ways in which gender conflict, especially in third world and war torn countries often victimize women. Instead of simply reading about how women are treated in these war torn and gender oppressive countries, students can also explore how these women have attempted to pave the way to independence through art. Although Afghan women are still far from free self-expression, whether artistic or otherwise, exploring art pieces such as these helps students recognize one of the many ways these women are challenging multiple gender barriers.

1. **Anthology of Poetry**

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***Open Gate: An Anthology of Haitian Poetry* ed. By Paul Laraque**

**Summary:** this text is the first bilingual volume of Haitian Creole poetry published in English. This anthology provides readers with contemporary Creole poetry that reflects the struggle for human rights in Haiti. There are a number of poems that focus on struggles of the masses against inequities of race and class but it also calls movement towards change and justice.

**Rationale:** This anthology of poetry is a valuable resource for English teachers as it explores the theme of conflict while using the Creole language to communicate this profound desire for social transformation. Using the Creole language in turn renders these sentiments even more powerful. It also contains poetry by Felix Morrisseau-Leroy who is considered the father of Creole literature in Haiti. Through him and other poets in this text, an experience denied in words born of the forced mingling of French, African and Amerindian cultures is able to find expression. Students will be exposed to poetry that not only explores how conflict has affected Haitians but also how powerful language can be seen as both a force of oppression as well as a means of experiencing freedom.

1. **Media/Documentary**

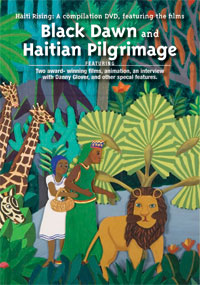


***Citizen Juling* a documentary by**

**Summary:** this documentary, released in 2008,explores the circumstances surrounding the death of Juling Pongkanmul, a teacher from northern Thailand who was assaulted by Muslim women in a village in southern Thailand's war zone in May 2006. The documentary, three hours and forty two minutes long, explores some of Thailand’s social conflicts. The documentary also focuses on how 3,000 people have "disappeared," died in detention or been the targets of allegedly government-sanctioned extra-judicial killings in Muslim southern Thailand

**Rationale:** this documentary offers students to multiple groups who are affected by conflict in Southern Thailand. Students will explore a topic that is most likely not discussed in any other classes they will take, perhaps except in a politics or world history course. Focusing on multiple groups being influenced by this conflict, students will gain access to nearly all the personalities in the film, including Juling's family and school colleagues, religious and political leaders, and Muslims who have suffered under the Thai government's military rule in the south. A society torn apart by unequal access to opportunities and justice and plagued with violence, yet held together by an unquestioning devotion to the king, Citizen Juling offers a rare glimpse into a world that is often left unexplored.

1. **Animated Film**

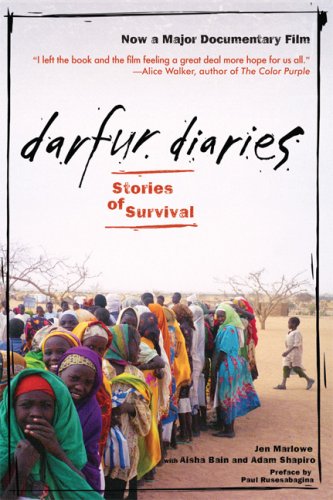


**“Black Dawn” by Robin Lloyd and Doreen Kraft**

**Summary:** This short animated film explores Haiti's early history, as well as offers a introduction to its culture, rich folklore, and religion. Using cut-out and other animation techniques, the filmmakers transform paintings by prominent Haitian artists into a visual tribute to the first black republic as well as and second independent country in the New World. The story follows the trans-Atlantic journey of Sili and Simba on a slave ship to Haiti. There they escape their slavery on a French plantation and join the fight for independence led by Toussaint L'Ouverture and Dessaline, toward the end joining in the celebration of the first raising of the Haitian flag.

**Rationale:** one of the main reasons for using this source to explore how conflict affects different groups of people, it combines both visuals as well as accessible language that will allow different types of learners to explore a difficult topic. The film is also rich in African-Caribbean culture as it provides rhythms and chants, solid historical background, and a vibrant animation style. It explores the story of a complex social movement while allowing students to explore the positive results or freedom that is possible when an oppressed group of people choses to fight back and challenge the conflict that enslaves them.

1. **Non-Fiction**



***Darfur Diaries: Stories of Survival* by Jen Marlowe with Aisha Bain and Adam Shapiro**

**Summary:** This book provides readers with multiple accounts of the Darfur tragedy that began in 2003. Explaining how the Sudanese Liberation Army in Darfur took up arms against the Sudanese government in February 2003 and in turn the government and allied militias answered the rebellion with mass murder, rape and destruction of villages and livelihood. Two million people were displaced, 400, 000 people killed. Based on accounts collected by three independent filmmakers who

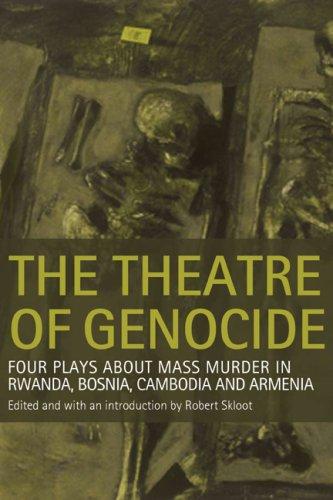
traveled to Darfurian refugee camps in eastern Chad and crept across the border into Northern Darfur readers are able to read first-hand accounts of how the tragedy in Darfur actually affected its own people.

**Rationale:** this text will provide students with first-hand accounts about the way in which conflict has killed and displaced Millions of people in Darfur. It is not a topic that is consistently discussed in the classroom and so the teacher will be able to shed light upon a topic that *needs* to be discussed but rarely is. Students will be able to learn about the tragedy in Darfur as those people directly affected by it explain their history, hopes, and fears, and the tragedy and resilience of their everyday lives rather than simply reading a third hand account of it. This creates an emotional reaction that is unique to this type of writing. Through these stories of survival “Darfur Diaries achieves what the American media has failed to do; it forces us to care about the Darfurians’ plight by allowing us to hear about their experience in their own words. By introducing us to a people with full lives, a rich culture and heritage, the authors demand that this time we not look away” ([www.darfurdiaries.org/thebook.htm](http://www.darfurdiaries.org/thebook.htm)). This text challenges the philosophical notion of proximity and will compel students to care about those affected by this tragedy from the perspective of refugees and displaced peoples, civilians and fighters resisting the Sudanese government, teachers, students, parents, children and community leaders.

1. **Theatre/Drama**

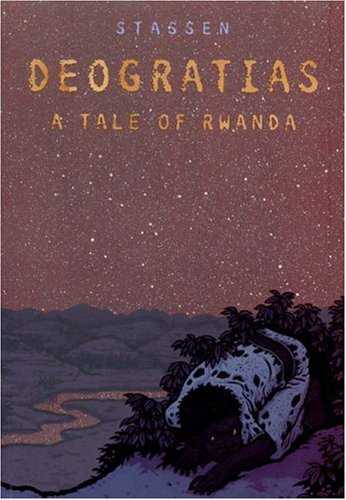
***The Theatre of Genocide: Four Plays about Mass Murder in Rwanda, Bosnia, Cambodia, and Armenia* Ed. by Robert Skloot**

**Summary:** in this compilation Robert Skloot brings together four plays that explore the face of modern genocide. The scripts deal with the destruction of four targeted populations: Armenians in Lorne Shirinian's *Exile in the Cradle*, Cambodians in Catherine Filloux's *Silence of God*, Bosnian Muslims in Kitty Felde's *A Patch of Earth*, and Rwandan Tutsis in Erik Ehn's *Maria Kizito*. Contributing to the study of genocide the plays present the stories that probe the actions of the perpetrators and the suffering of their victims.



**Rationale:** using a text such as this will provide English teachers with an opportunity to explore a sensitive topic like genocide from multiple perspectives and through multiple cultural lenses. It is a step towards understanding the terror and trauma experienced by families, soldiers, children and other groups and having students in Canadian classrooms face the reality that although we often hear of see these atrocities being committed in the media, we rarely question what we as individuals can do to aid or better understand what happened. It challenges students to recognize that simply because something is not a personal experience or in our “proximity” it does not mean it is unimportant or should be left unexplored. Having students actually read the plays out loud would make students feel like active participants in their learning and may help promote critical and conscious thinking in a different way.

1. **Graphic Novel**



***Deogratias: A tale of Rwanda* by Alexis Siegel**

**Summary:** this graphic novel tells the story of a young Hutu man, Deogratias, who wanders around in a half-crazed state in post-genocide Rwanda. He attempts to block out his nightmares by drinking Urwagwa, a warm beer made from fermented bananas. At times, he believes himself to be a dog, and as the story progresses the reader actually comes to view him as one as the artists of this text presents him graphically as such in the panels. Deogratias's story is told in flashback form, as a young boy just wanting trying to lose his virginity. The girl he loses his virginity to is a Tutsi, and when the Rwandan president is assassinated, and the murder is quickly blamed on the Tutsis, Deogratias is conscripted and forced to fight. He hides his girlfriend, Benina, in his home, going so far as to lock her in in order to protect her.

**Rationale:** this graphic novel will provide students with insight into into a dark chapter of recent human history and exposes the West's role in the tragedy. Stassen provides the reader with a glimpse into the aftermath of the genocide and the events leading up to it which in turn heightens the impact of the horror, giving powerful expression to the indescribable experience of ordinary Hutus caught up in the violence. It will allow students to explore the way text can use time shifts, flashbacks, and parallel narratives to relay multiple perspectives. It will also provide teachers with an opportunity to explore ideas often found in classical texts such as Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* while touching upon relevant themes such as how conflict can result in immense tragedy on both a large scale as well as on an individual level. Being a graphic novel it will also provide the class with an opportunity to explore an important, tragic event in human history that will appeal to different learners.